

**TOPICAL AGENDA**  
**The Department of Defense (Personnel & Readiness)**  
**and the Selective Service System**

DoD Participants:

- ✓ Hon. Charles S. Abell, Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
- Mr. William Carr, Acting Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy
- Colonel David Kopanski, Deputy Director, Accession Policy

SSS Participants:

- Mr. Lewis C. Brodsky, Acting Director of Selective Service
- Mr. Richard S. Flahavan, Director of Public & Congressional Affairs

**I. Review 30-year time-line - SSS major policy issues**

A. Draft ends in 1973; Agency placed in "Deep Standby" from 1976 to 1980. Ninety-eight "record-keepers" remain in SSS, part-time Reserve Officers kept on board, but no registration, no Board Members.

B. 1980 - Cold War continues. President Carter decides to revitalize SSS after Soviets invade Afghanistan and MOBEXs indicate need. No draft, but resumes registration program for men. Wants to include women but Congress says no. 10,000 Board Members appointed and trained. DoD sets preparedness goal for SSS: "Be ready to provide first draftees to MEPS at M+13 and 100,000 by M+30."

C. 1988 - Congress reacts to military medical shortages ("war stoppers"). Language inserted in the Defense Authorization Act telling SSS to develop a "structure" which would allow the registration and induction of health care personnel in an emergency. DoD identifies more than 60 health care specialties to include in the SSS Health Care Personnel Delivery System (HCPDS). Planning calls for first HCPDS draftees by M+42. HCPDS becomes a paper and computer exercise lasting many years.

D. 1989 -1991 - End of Cold War, Desert Storm, no draft, and SSS remains in standby status with flat-lined annual budgets.

E. 1993 and 1994 - Detractors in the Congress challenge need for continuing to fund SSS and peacetime registration. Section 547(b), FY 1993 DoD Authorization Act requires SECDEF, in concert with SSS, to report on continuation of peacetime registration. This was accomplished, registration is retained, and an interagency task force review was

formed, led by the NSC. Conclusion is announced by President Clinton: preserve SSS and peacetime registration in current standby status for three reasons:

1. A hedge against underestimating the number of soldiers needed to fight a future war;
2. A symbol of national resolve to potential adversaries; and,
3. A link between the all-volunteer Armed Forces and society-at-large.

Clinton also instructs SSS to increase operational efficiency. Instructs DoD to update MOB requirements for SSS, re-examine timelines, and review arguments for and against continuing to exclude women from registration.

F. 1994 - Defense issues new "post-Cold War" guidance to SSS: "provide first untrained draftee to MEPS at M+193; first Health Care draftee at M+222." DoD reaffirms that it is not necessary to register or draft women (for a conventional draft of untrained manpower) because they are prohibited by policy from serving in ground combat assignments. SSS recognizes women may have to be included in a health care draft.

G. 1998 - DoD Health Affairs says health care personnel would be needed earlier than M+222 in a future conflict. Guidance changed to M+90. Today, HCPDS can be implemented, but ability to meet M+90 time frame is doubtful. Program not fully tested and compliance aspects still not complete.

H. 1995 through 2000 - Anti-SSS Members of Congress almost successful in eliminating SSS through the appropriations process. SSS undergoes structure and program reductions to make ends meet. Readiness suffers.

I. 2000 and 2001 - DoD and SSS plan and implement joint mailing project to increase peacetime relevancy of SSS and improve timeliness and address accuracy of DoD recruiting direct mail campaigns.

J. 2002 and 2003 - Administration says use of draft not an option for war on terrorism or potential war with Iraq. Rep. Rangel and Sen. Hollings introduce bills (H.R. 163 and S. 89) call for reinstating a draft for military and national service. SECDEF adamant and vocal against using the draft for any immediate or likely contingency. Most recently, Reps. Paul, DeFazio and Frank introduce H.R. 487, calling for repeal of the Military Selective Service Act and an end to the SSS within six months of the bill becoming law.

## ISSUE PAPER

### Synopsis:

With known shortages of military personnel with certain critical skills, and with the need for the nation to be capable of responding to domestic emergencies as a part of Homeland Security planning, changes should be made in the Selective Service System's registration program and primary mission.

### Situation:

Currently, and in accordance with the Military Selective Service Act (MSSA) [50 U.S.C., App. 451 et seq.], the Selective Service System (SSS) collects and maintains personal information from all U.S. male citizens and resident aliens. Under this process, each man is required to "present himself for and submit to registration" upon reaching age 18. The methods by which a man can register with Selective Service include the Internet, mail-back postcard, checking a box on other government forms, and through the driver's license applications process in many states. The collected data is retained in an active computer file until the man reaches age 26 and is no longer draft eligible. It consists of the man's name, address, Social Security number, and date of birth. Currently, 91 percent of all men, ages 18 through 25, are registered, enabling the SSS to conduct a timely, fair, and equitable draft in the event the Congress and the President decide to reinstate conscription during a crisis.

However, the Secretary of Defense and Department of Defense manpower officials have stated recently that a draft will not be necessary for any foreseeable crisis. They assume that sufficient fighting capability exists in today's "all-volunteer" active and reserve Armed Forces for likely contingencies, making a conventional draft of untrained manpower somewhat obsolete. Yet, Defense manpower officials concede there are critical shortages of military personnel with certain special skills, such as medical personnel, linguists, computer network engineers, etc. The costs of attracting and retaining such personnel for military service could be prohibitive, leading some officials to conclude that while a conventional draft may never be needed, a draft of men and women possessing these critical skills may be warranted in a future crisis, if too few volunteer.

### Proposal:

**In line with today's needs, the SSS' structure, programs and activities should be re-engineered toward maintaining a national inventory of American men and (for the first time) women, ages 18 through 34, with an added focus on identifying individuals with critical skills.**

An interagency task force should examine the feasibility of this proposal which would require amendments to the MSSA, expansion of the current registration program, and inclusion of women. In addition to the basic identifying information collected in the

current program, the expanded and revised program would require all registrants to indicate whether they have been trained in, possess, and professionally practice, one or more skills critical to national security or community health and safety. This could take the form of an initial "self-declaration" as a part of the registration process. Men and women would enter on the SSS registration form a multi-digit number representing their specific critical skill (e.g., similar to military occupational specialty or Armed Forces Specialty Code with Skill Identifier), taken from a lengthy list of skills to be compiled and published by the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security. Individuals proficient in more than one critical skill would list the practiced skill in which they have the greatest degree of experience and competency. They would also be required to update reported information as necessary until they reach age 35. This unique data base would provide the military (and national, state, and municipal government agencies) with immediately available links to vital human resources...in effect, a single, most accurate and complete, national inventory of young Americans with special skills.

While the data base's "worst-case" use might be to draft such personnel into military or homeland security assignments during a national mobilization, its very practical peacetime use could be to support recruiting and direct marketing campaigns aimed at encouraging skilled personnel to volunteer for community or military service opportunities, and to consider applying for hard-to-fill public sector jobs. Local government agencies could also tap this data base to locate nearby specialists for help with domestic crises and emergency situations.

With the changes described above, SSS programs would be modified to serve the contemporary needs of several customers: Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security (FEMA, U.S. Border Patrol, U.S. Customs, INS), Corporation for National Service, Public Health Service, and other federal and state agencies seeking personnel with critical skills for national security or community service assignments. The SSS would thus play a more vital, relevant, and immediate role in shoring up America's strength and readiness in peace and war.

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**ii. Are today's SSS capabilities in sync with DoD needs?**

A. Is there a need to preserve the capability of conducting a draft of untrained manpower? If so, is the time frame still M+193?

B. How likely is it that DoD will need SSS to conduct a Health Care draft?

C. How severe are any other critical skills shortages in the military?

D. Are the Clinton-era's abstract reasons for preserving the SSS and peacetime registration still valid?

E. Would DoD still fight any and all Congressional initiatives to cut or eliminate the SSS?

**iii. Consider restructuring the SSS to address contemporary national security needs**

A. Focus might be on relieving critical skills shortages

B. Include potential service to DHS and other government agencies that must attract/recruit skilled personnel.

C. Explore the feasibility of developing a single-point data base of virtually all young Americans, 18 through 34 years old, immediately identifiable by critical skills possessed and practiced. Data base could be used for a draft in war and for recruiting in peacetime.

1. Would require modification of SSS mission and changes to authorizing law.

2. Cost considerations.

**iv. Next steps - Statement of Administration Policy needed**

A. DoD decides what services it needs and wants from SSS: Three options for consideration:

1. SSS status quo; however, redefine the DoD mission guidance and time lines to make the SSS more relevant to DoD's needs and the SECDEF's policy. The current guidance of providing untrained inductees at M+193 runs counter to the SECDEF's views and is out-of-sync with possible wartime scenarios.

2. Return the SSS to "Deep Standby" status. If a draft of any kind is highly unlikely and undesirable, eliminate peacetime registration and dismiss the 10,000 trained volunteer Board Members. However, should a draft be needed, it would take more than a year to get the system capable of conducting a fair and equitable draft from Deep Standby status.

3. Restructure the SSS and shift its peacetime focus to accommodate DoD's most likely requirements in a crisis. Plan for conducting a more likely draft of individuals with special and critical skills.

a. Minimum requirement: SSS mission guidance and time lines must be redefined promptly by DoD to allow more relevant pre-mobilization planning and funding for the possibility of a critical skills draft at M+90 or sooner. Peacetime registration of men 18 through 25 would continue, but consideration would also be given to identifying men with certain critical skills among these year-of-birth groupings. A post-mobilization plan would also be devised and computer programming accomplished for a full-blown critical skills draft. The HCPDS program is completed, brought to the forefront of SSS readiness planning, and tested through exercises. Without a reaffirmation of relevance and adjustment of mission, the SSS will be an easy target for reduction or elimination by detractors in the Congress and the Administration.

b. Expanded pre-mobilization requirement: SSS peacetime registration expanded to include women and men, 18 through 34 years old, and collects information on critical skills within these year-of-birth groupings. Requires change of law and additional funding (see Issue Paper dated 11 Feb 2003).

B. If more examination of the issue and options is needed, consider forming an interagency task force to provide the Administration with a policy recommendation. Possible players: DoD, SSS, DHS, NSC, OMB, Corporation for National Service, PHS, others.

C. After suitable analysis, obtain a White House Statement of Administration Policy (SAP) announcing plans for the future of the SSS (course of action 1, 2, or 3, above).

D. If the SSS is to expand its pre-mobilization activities to include registration of women and collection of critical skills identifiers, it will be necessary to market the concept for approval by the Armed Services Committees and Appropriations Committees and draft implementing legislation for congressional consideration. The changes will be implemented after the amended law is signed and funding is identified.